

Bozeman Deaconess  
HOSPITAL

PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

Exhibit No. 5

Date 2-18-09

Bill No. SB 446

2/18/09

Dear Committee Chair and Members:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the physicians of the Bozeman Deaconess Health Group. We have been working with the hospital, MMA and MHA in regards to SB 446 to address the "specialty hospital" issues of all parties. Our preference is to continue the current moratorium until we see the impact the current economy will have on health care reimbursement for our community hospital. Our concern is the health of our community hospital.

In the alternative, we support SB 446. We think that there are favorable compromises in the bill that address the concerns of both hospitals and physicians. Specifically we support that the applicant must agree to have on staff 24 hours a day, physicians who can address emergent needs of patients who are "bedded" in a specialty hospital. We support the need for a formal agreement between the community hospital and a specialty hospital so that if a transfer needs to occur, the community hospital and its medical staff (us) have the information needed in order to provide the best possible care for a patient that we have no prior knowledge of.

We agree that the community hospital must have the choice to hold a majority ownership interest in any specialty hospital. Hopefully this choice may serve to create a synergistic rather than an adversarial relationship between the community hospital and the applicant.

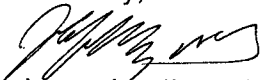
Finally, we fully support the charity care amendment in the bill. We believe all hospitals should have in place a charity care policy. This will allow uninsured and underinsured patients the option of the seeking specialized care and will address the concerns of community hospitals regarding the increasing financial burden that a specialty hospital may cause.

We have worked many hours with MHA, MMA and the hospital on this bill and believe we have reached a good compromise.

Again our first choice would be to continue the moratorium. If that is not the decision of the Committee, a vote in favor of SB 446 is essential.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,



James Loeffelholz

Medical Director Bozeman Deaconess Health Group